

**KENDRICK PARK DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Tuesday, November 23, 2010 – 4:30 PM**  
**Meeting at Room 101 Bangs Center**  
**MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Peg Roberts, Marilyn Rodzwell, Alan Snow, Susan Sheldon and Christina Mata

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Peter Blier, Liz Rosenberg and Hope Crolus

**STAFF PRESENT:** Dave Ziomek, Director, Conservation and Development;  
Linda Chalfant, Director, LSSE;  
Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner

**CONSULTANTS:** Steve Cecil and David O'Connor, of The Cecil Group

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Adrian Fabos, resident

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1. **Introductions** – The group members had already introduced themselves at the site visit or prior to the meeting, so introductions were dispensed with.  
There was a brief review of the rules of the new Open Meeting Law.
2. **Minutes** – Some members of the group had not yet been sworn in, so no vote was taken on the Minutes of November 17<sup>th</sup>.
3. **Discussion of Site Visit** – There was a brief discussion of the site visit.
4. **Election of Officers** – Since some members of the group had not yet been sworn in elections were postponed until the next meeting.
5. **Review of work of Kendrick Park Committee and its Report to the Town Manager, dated May 2009**  
Ms. Mata read the Vision and Goals sections of the Report.  
Mr. Cecil noted that if there is not enough money to build the park all at once, we may wish to build it in pieces or layers, so it won't appear to be partially complete.  
Ms. Roberts stated that the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee had discussed donating stone benches to Kendrick Park. The 250<sup>th</sup> Committee will be meeting on December 1<sup>st</sup>, which will be its last meeting. The members may discuss a donation at that time.  
Mr. O'Connor suggested that there may be some element of the park that could be paid for by the 250<sup>th</sup>.  
Ms. Chalfant suggested that the 250<sup>th</sup> may give money to the town for a different purpose. Someone should attend the meeting on December 1<sup>st</sup> to represent the needs of Kendrick Park.  
Mr. Ziomek stated that the town intends to seek funding from PARC grants for construction of Kendrick Park. There are a number of other projects that are also being considered for grant proposals. Mr. Ziomek offered to speak with Mr. Musante, the Town Manager, and the JCPC (Joint Capital Planning Committee) regarding budgeting for funds to match a possible PARC grant. The PARC grants only fund a portion of a project and the community is

expected to fund the rest. There can also be a private fund-raising effort, Mr. Ziomek said. The JCPC has a “five-year window”. It is currently considering budgets for FY 12 through FY 16. The maximum amount of a PARC grant is \$500,000.

**6. Review of other documents regarding Kendrick Park and its history**

Ms. Brestrup gave a summary of documents that are included in the Report to the Town Manager and other documents that are available to the consultants in the Planning Department if they wish further information about the park.

**7. Review of consultants’ Scope of Work and Schedule**

The group reviewed the document entitled Kendrick Park Schematic Design Process, revised November 19, 2010. This document outlines a series of working design meetings with the consultant and a series of public meetings to which at least a dozen boards and committees and civic groups would be specifically invited, along with the public. There was general agreement that the process outlined in this document was workable.

Mr. Cecil expressed some reservations about not being present at the public meetings in which the designs would be discussed. He likes to present his own work. However, if he were to attend the public meetings, it would be in addition to the meetings that are already included in his Scope of Work.

Mr. Cecil offered to package a presentation for staff to bring to the public meetings that would be a “self-guided tour of the park”. He also suggested that Jack Ahearn, a professor of landscape architecture at UMass, could attend the public meetings and answer questions and communicate to The Cecil Group about the public comments. Mr. Ahearn is already included among the sub-consultants on this project.

The group discussed a meeting schedule, as follows:

Thursday, January 6 <sup>th</sup> – 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.	Working session with consultants regarding design
Thursday, January 20 <sup>th</sup> or 27 <sup>th</sup> – 7:00 p.m.	Public meeting to which other boards and committees would be invited
Thursday, February 10 – 4:00 p.m.	Working session with consultants regarding design
Thursday, March 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 7:00 p.m.	Public meeting to which other boards and committees would be invited
Thursday, March 24 <sup>th</sup> – 4:00 p.m.	Working session with consultants regarding design and cost estimate

Monday, April, Select Board meeting  
Date and time TBA

Final presentation to Select Board, other  
boards and committees and public of  
Schematic Design and Preliminary Cost  
Estimate

## **8. Discussion of proposed programmatic elements and design issues**

Steve Cecil stated that the consultants would develop a program based on the written documentation that they have received and based on tonight's meeting. Among the items that they will include will be:

- Selectively preserve existing trees;
- Provide active and passive recreation areas;
- Provide a play area, possibly a natural play area, which can be multi-purpose.

The group discussed the inclusion of public restrooms in the park.

Mr. Snow stated that some members of the former Kendrick Park Committee liked the idea of a public restroom and some didn't like it. Maybe it can be a low-profile building and can be blended in with the design.

Ms. Mata stated that she was "torn" about the idea. In her mind restrooms were an "add on".

Ms. Roberts reminded the group that the park was going to be at the beginning of the Gateway.

Mr. Cecil asked the group to think about the criteria for decision making.

Ms. Roberts noted that expense and upkeep and maintenance were the big issues. An isolated restroom will be difficult to maintain.

Ms. Chalfant suggested that a better question to ask might be "where in the park should we bring in temporary restrooms?" We need to designate a place, she said. "Porta-Potties" are required for many events. She recommended that the group think about the types of activities that will occur in the park.

Mr. Cecil stated that the scale of restroom that is needed for a special event would be greater than that needed for a small park. The restroom, if included, needs to be sized correctly.

Mr. Ziomek stated that he had gone through this thought process with Puffer's Pond. We need to think about the context. There is the bigger issue of public restrooms in downtown. We need public restrooms, but Kendrick Park may not be the place to put them. Public restrooms in Kendrick Park would not be well located to serve the downtown area.

Mr. Cecil noted that the "occupant load" on the park is low. Amherst needs restrooms in the downtown. However, we should think about the possibility that the need for a restroom in Kendrick Park might occur in the future. We should think about a way to install temporary facilities. We should establish a set of criteria to help us in the future, should it be decided that restrooms make sense at some point in the future.

Mr. Ziomek recommended that the group be prepared to defend its decision. He noted that the Town Common holds most of the large events and that the bus stops are there. It makes more sense to have public restrooms somewhere in the vicinity of the Town Common.

Mr. Cecil recommended that we establish a way for dealing with temporary facilities at this time and come up with a set of criteria for how restrooms, if needed, might be dealt with in the future.

Ms. Mata stated that Kendrick Park shouldn't have to bear the burden of supplying public restrooms for the whole downtown.

Mr. Cecil asked about the idea of a carousel, since it had been mentioned in the report to the Town Manager. Ms. Brestrup noted that some members of the Kendrick Park Committee had suggested it as a possible "regional draw".

Mr. Cecil stated that he and his firm had experience with carousels in various locations, such as Hull and Warwick. They are difficult to maintain. The groups that are responsible for them are constantly working to keep them operating. There is a lot of money and operating cost associated with carousels.

Mr. Cecil suggested that there may be opportunities for things to occur or be added in the future. We don't need to "go out and invent them now". Public art can play a role. Wind sculpture is a possibility. There can be opportunities for great ideas later on. The conclusion is that the group is open to ideas.

Ms. Mata noted that a skateboard plaza had also been included in a list of possible ideas for the park. A skateboard plaza had been included in the list because the Kendrick Park Committee wanted to honor the fact that a lot of people had supported it.

Mr. Cecil stated that we can create opportunities for skateboarding without creating a skateboard park.

Ms. Mata noted that many young people who are serious skateboarders find places to skateboard and do not need to have designated places for it. Ms. Sheldon was satisfied that some hardscape could accommodate the needs of skateboarders.

The Committee members expressed concern about the conflict between pedestrian traffic and skateboarders.

There was discussion about whether sports courts should be included. Ms. Chalfant suggested including bocce courts. The group expressed support for this idea. Bocce courts can be removed if no one uses them.

Ms. Roberts stressed the need for "multi-purpose" areas. Frisbee is big in Amherst, she said.

Mr. Cecil stated that lawn areas can accommodate Frisbee, badminton and other similar activities.

The group discussed the idea of performing arts. Do we need a structure? Various types of structures were discussed, such as a band shell, a stage, a bandstand or gazebo and a farmers' market structure.

Mr. O'Connor noted that a farmers' market can be accommodated in many ways and doesn't necessarily need a structure.

Mr. Cecil stated that performing arts spaces sometimes use temporary structures like tents. The group looked at a photograph of the outdoor performing arts space at Swarthmore College, which is a series of wide stone steps with wide grass treads.

Mr. Snow noted that the traffic surrounding the park creates loud noise within the park. It may be helpful to modify the grade to screen out the noise of the surroundings.

The group discussed the noise issue. Mr. Cecil noted that if there is too much ambient noise, we may build a space for performing arts, but no one will use it. The park is also a bit close to a residential neighborhood for loud performances. The performing arts space could be small and this will dictate the types of events that will occur there. We need to think about the scale of the space and the ambient noise.

Mr. Snow mentioned that there was a design for the Town Common that included a performing arts space.

Mr. Cecil suggested that if we chose to build a performing arts space it needs to be built so that it doesn't look empty when not in use.

Ms. Roberts stated that parking will limit the types of events that can occur in the park.

Mr. Cecil noted that a few hundred people would be the limit that a performing arts space could accommodate.

Mr. O'Connor asked about the timing of events. He suggested making the space a little intimate and a little away from the public ways, if possible. Ms. Chalfant stated that events tend to happen in the summertime.

Mr. Cecil stated that the design will be about "being beautiful" and having a "place to be".

The group discussed the idea of a farmers' market.

Mr. Ziomek noted that there had been discussions about a public, multi-purpose space, where art fairs and farmers' markets could occur. There are a number of events that occur where people want to display things. The 1986 design for the Town Common was never built because of limited resources.

Mr. Cecil stated that farmers' markets are primarily about trucks – bringing in produce and parking. We should design this park and its amenities so that they don't look empty when not in use. There could be a small farmers' market annex in Kendrick Park.

Mr. Ziomek suggested that the sidewalk could be widened along North Pleasant Street to accommodate a market. There is already an informal walkway along North Pleasant Street for UMass students.

Mr. O'Connor suggested the possibility of creating a temporary one-way route on North Pleasant Street to accommodate periodic farmers' markets. Ms. Rodzwell asked if the Fire Department would agree to this change.

Mr. Ziomek suggested that the park could be widened by eliminating the parallel parking spaces on North Pleasant Street.

Mr. Cecil suggested that the sidewalk could be widened into the park. He also suggested that the park be designed in concert with the Gateway Corridor and that a "common design language" be used for both.

The group discussed night lighting. Ms. Mata noted that she wanted the park to be safe at night.

Mr. Cecil observed that there may be adequate ambient light in the park from the surrounding street lights.

Mr. Fabos, a neighbor, stated that residents of the area would like some lighting in the park but not too much.

Mr. O'Connor suggested that there be lighting along East Pleasant Street. Mr. Cecil suggested that lighting could be brought into the center of the park.

Mr. Snow noted that students travel through the park at night after the bars close. There was discussion of potential vandalism.

Ms. Mata noted that people respect and do not vandalize the beauty of Central Park, in the middle of New York City.

Mr. Cecil suggested that we could use a "dark skies" approach and use indirect lighting. He recommended that we consider what features of the park we would like to have emphasized at nighttime and in winter. Mr. Snow pointed out that the park includes existing evergreens, which would act as winter features.

Ms. Roberts noted that the town has been turning off street lights to save money.

The group discussed a possible ice rink and the sale of Christmas trees by the Boy Scouts. Mr. Ziomek noted that the sidewalks in and around the park should be plowed in the winter, because one major desire of everyone for the park is that it should be accessible to people of all ages.

There was discussion about where sidewalks should go in the park. Ms. Mata stated that sidewalks should be part of a perimeter loop and that there should be a walkway through the park to allow people with mobility impairments to enter the park.

Mr. Snow questioned the boundaries of the park and suggested that we expand our view of where the work on the park begins and ends. To date we have just been focusing "curb to curb". We should go beyond that in our design thinking. There are opportunities at both the north and south ends of the park to incorporate the public right-of-way as part of the park.

Ms. Roberts noted that the northern end is seen as a "gateway". She asked if foot traffic were brought in at that end would the possibility of a large space be compromised. She suggested that there could be "cul-de-sac" spaces where people could sit quietly and read.

Mr. Cecil recommended that people need to be able to take a walk through the park. However, in winter, it may be important for the park to be attractive enough to be looked at from outside.

Ms. Sheldon suggested that the park could be more like an arboretum.

Mr. Ziomek stated that moving through the park is important and that a key essential aspect would be places to sit and linger, places that are accessible to everyone.

Ms. Sheldon suggested that the southern end is a good place to linger, drink coffee, sit and work on computers. She referred to Bryant Park in New York City, with its movable chairs and tables.

Mr. O'Connor and Mr. Cecil noted that movable site furnishings take a certain level of maintenance. They need to be locked up at the end of the day. Movable furniture tends to work well where there is a food booth and a lot of activity.

The group discussed having some places with stone benches and some places with benches of other materials.

Mr. Snow suggested having ornamental fencing around part of the park so that parents could let their children roam free. The group discussed separating the park from East Pleasant Street.

Mr. Cecil said that it is important to create an edge. Central Park has a wall with gateways. Kendrick Park shouldn't end up looking like the Town Common. People should know when they are in the park.

Ms. Mata noted that this concept is a European/Urban concept to have a strong edge. Also many little parks in New York City have fences around them.

Mr. Cecil noted that it is a psychological edge that is required. We should also think about providing opportunities for public art. We don't have to choose the art now, but provide places for it to occur.

The group discussed Tan Brook. Mr. Snow noted that there is flooding. He suggested a design that would reduce the amount of water flowing into the brook.

Mr. Cecil suggested that there may be a funding source for dealing with stormwater problems.

Mr. Ziomek asked if there was a way to help mitigate the stormwater runoff. He commented on the volume of water coming through Tan Brook. What can we design to help to catch the water and slow it down? He suggested that a small group (Alan Snow, Chris Brestrup and Dave Ziomek) ask Jason Skeels, Town Engineer, and Guilford Mooring, Superintendent of Public Works, about daylighting the brook.

Mr. Cecil asked about making the culvert larger as it passes through the park. Mr. Snow suggested leaving an area of the park that would not be damaged by flooding.

Mr. Ziomek recommended that Mr. Snow communicate with the designers about special trees in the park.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Christine M. Brestrup, Senior Planner